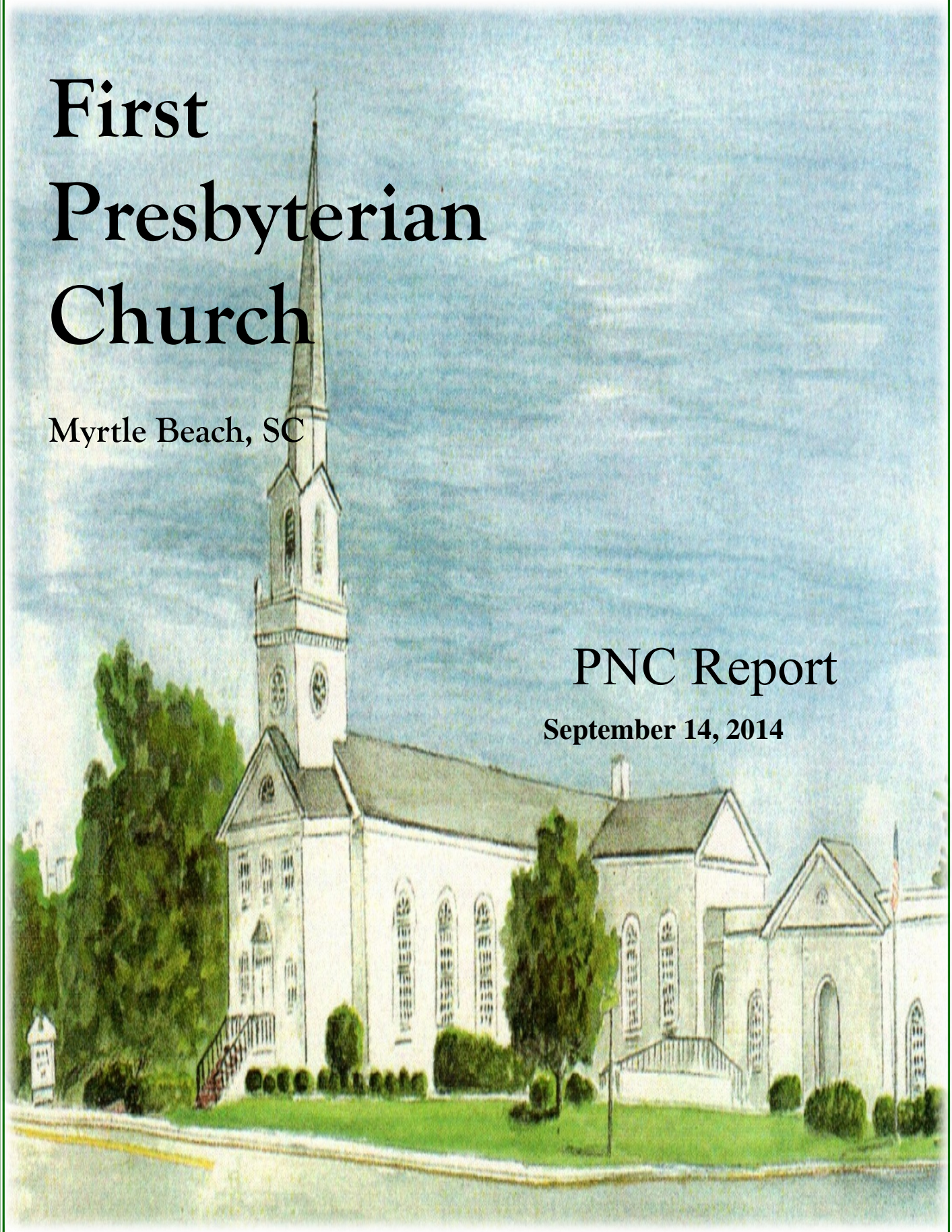
First Presbyterian Church

Myrtle Beach, SC



PNC Report

September 14, 2014

The Pastor Nominating Committee

Would Like You to Meet…..

The Rev. Christa Brewer

The Pastor Nominating Committee
Joyfully and Unanimously
Recommends to the Congregation

The Rev. Christa Brewer

and Nominates Her as Associate Pastor
of the First Presbyterian Church
Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

Jim Watson and Bob Calamari, Co-chairs

Tyler Anthony	Margaret Bellamy	Summer Butler
Sue Cranford	Lucia Gore	Joseph Jumper
Raymond Riggs	Diane Stokes	Amelia Tadlock
	Robert Warner	

The Session of First Presbyterian Church requests that our congregation meet today for the purpose of electing an associate pastor and approving the terms of call.

The Committee on Ministry of New Harmony examined The Rev. Christa Brewer on September 9, 2014. After and impressive examination, Christa was approved and granted permission to move onto the field, pending this congregational vote. With out final approval, Christa will move to Myrtle Beach and officially begin her work at First Presbyterian on November 1, 2014. She will be introduced at both worship services on Sunday, November 2, and at Early Sabbath on Thursday, November 6. An installation will be planned later in conjunction with the presbytery calendar.

Comments from our PNC Members:

"We are excited to have Christa join our FPC family. She is such a joyful and intelligent person. Her enthusiasm for sharing the word of God will undoubtedly be a true blessing for our congregation and community." *Summer Butler*

"Our committee is very excited to welcome Christa to FPC of Myrtle Beach. We knew before we met her that she had all the qualifications we were searching for, and more! When meeting her via Skype and in person we found she also has the qualities of compassion, energy, leadership and humor that will make her a great fit with our church and staff. Christa will be a blessing to our church and community." *Lucia Gore*

"God's plan is very clear with the addition of Christa to our incredible ministry team here at First Presbyterian Church of Myrtle Beach. Her experience and caring heart will benefit our congregation greatly as our new Associate Pastor. She is organized and detail-orientated, which will compliment John and Cam in the leadership of our congregation. We are very blessed to have Christa join the family here at FPC." *Ray Riggs*

"Christa will do an excellent job assisting with the leadership of FPC. She will add to the dynamic team that our church has established. Christa's experience as an Associate Pastor will help our church continue to grow." *Ty Anthony*

"Christa brings a fresh new perspective to our church and will be a great addition to our all-star cast of pastors. She will complement John and Cam very well. Her Stanford and Princeton Seminary background as well as her level of experience will be very beneficial to our congregation both in pastoral care, general friendship, biblical commitment and congregational unity. We are so pleased to be blessed with Christa Brewer as our new Associate Pastor." *Bob Calamari*

"From the moment I met her, I knew that Christa would be the right choice for FPC. Her warm personality accompanied by a constant smile immediately drew myself to her, and I knew I wanted her to be our new associate pastor. I am so excited to see what she will bring to FPC!" *Joseph Jumper*

(PNC Comments continued)

"We prayed for patience and guidance in our search and God answered with Christa. She is a scholar, a care giver, a teacher, an organizer, a good speaker and very likable. We are very excited she has decided to join us, and eagerly await her arrival and assimilation into FPC. Christa will be a big help in taking our church to the next level." *Margaret Bellamy*

"Christa will be such a fabulous addition to our church staff! Her biblical knowledge and experience is just incredible! She is going to be a great asset and we knew it as soon as we talked to her. Her big smile and warm hugs will warm your heart! We are blessed!"
Sue Cranford

"After our first Skype session with Christa, everyone said "Wow"! She did her homework researching our website and asked detailed questions about our church. Then our second Skype had us saying "She is too good to be true." Christa's talents were exactly what we were looking for. Finally after meeting her, we realized most importantly that her "heart" was a perfect match for our church family. FPC in Myrtle Beach is so fortunate to have found Christa Brewer."
Diane DeVaughn Stokes

"We were excited to learn that Christa has had Stephen Leadership Training, and is qualified and ready to work with our Stephen Ministry team. She has remarkable talent and experience in organizing and leading small groups. She will be a great help to our Stephen ministers as well as the Deacons, the Women of the Church, and all of our various groups and committees."
Amelia Tadlock

"Christa is a remarkable teacher and organizer. She has vision and brings us a world-wide perspective. Her sermons are inspirational. Our Skype sessions as well as her visit with us in Myrtle Beach confirmed her knowledge, enthusiasm, and her radiant joy. She is compassionate and caring. She is faith in action. Her supervisors, references, and people who know her all told us that she is a wonderful minister and that we would be most fortunate to have her as our Associate Pastor. Every member of our 12-member committee has met and talked with Christa in person and every one of us supports our recommendation." *Jim Watson*

"Our committee has prayed, for nearly a year, that God would lead us to the person with the pastoral, teaching and organizational skills needed for our church. After interviewing several good candidates for this position, we met Christa in a Skype interview. That meeting was like a breath of fresh air. Since that time, I was so looking forward to meeting her. After meeting with her, sharing meals, and just getting to know her, I believe she is the minister that has the personality and skill set we need for this position. Christa is the answer to our prayer."
Robby Warner

Biographical Information

The Rev. Christa Brewer was born and raised in Carmichael, California, a suburb of Sacramento. Her father, David, worked for the California Transportation Commission and her mother, Phyllis, was a Kindergarten teacher (both now happily retired to Livermore, California). She is the younger of two daughters, and her older sister, Karen, lives in Grand Rapids, Michigan with her husband, Mike, and their two children. They have made Christa the proud aunt to their son, Steven (2 ½ years old), and their brand new daughter, Megan (almost 2 months). Christa currently lives with her sweet leopard gecko, Lily.

After graduating from high school with an International Baccalaureate diploma, she went on to Stanford University, where she graduated in 2001 with a BA in Classics and Economics. Planning to go into Egyptology and the study of classical economies, God called Christa to instead explore vocational ministry, and she served as the college ministry intern at First Presbyterian Church, Winston-Salem, North Carolina from 2001-2002. Sensing in that year a call to pursue vocational ministry, but too late to apply for seminary the following year, she worked for a year as an administrator of a financial services company before enrolling at Princeton Theological Seminary in 2003.

While she had an original seminary graduation date of 2006, three months into her time at seminary, her graduation date moved to 2008, as she agreed to take a year-long internship as the assistant minister at Groomsport Presbyterian Church in Northern Ireland and also added an MA in Christian Education to her studies. In addition to her internship in Northern Ireland, Christa's other internship opportunities included serving as a chaplain to Stanford Hospital and Lucille Packard Children's Hospital for her Clinical Pastoral Education, serving a pastoral intern to three churches in Charleston, West Virginia, and serving as a summer assistant minister to two small rural churches in Mountmellick and Tullamore in the Republic of Ireland. While in Princeton, Christa served for three years as the editorial assistant for *Theology Today*, the internationally acclaimed theological journal produced by the seminary. In 2008, Christa graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary with a M.Div. and a M.A. in Christian Education.

(*Biographical Information continued)*

While seeking a call after seminary, Christa served as a volunteer intern at the Mercer County, New Jersey chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, and was eventually called in November 2008 to be the Associate Pastor at The Woodlands Community Presbyterian Church in The Woodlands, Texas, a northern suburb of Houston, where she has concentrated her time on adult education and discipleship, mission, pastoral care, and worship. From 2010-2012, Christa studied at San Francisco Theological Seminary, eventually earning her Diploma in the Art of Spiritual Direction, thus certifying her as a spiritual director. In the Presbytery of New Covenant, Christa has served on the New Church Development Committee and the Committee on Preparation for Ministry. She has also led a women's retreat and a deacon's retreat for congregations within the Presbytery. Most important to her, has been the colleague group of young pastors that she and a friend started in the Presbytery, which has met together monthly since October 2010. In June 2014, five members of this original group of pastors were given a two-year grant from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary to study spiritual communities and spiritual disciplines as they take place in community, and group members look forward to staying connected through their work on this grant.

Outside of her work at the church, Christa has become very involved with The Woodlands Community Band, where she plays her flute and serves as the secretary of their board. Christa's other hobbies include world travel, Irish dancing, counted cross-stitch, reading, hiking, and exploring her surrounding community. She intends to make visits to the beach a new hobby.

Christa looks forward with anticipation to the next step of her journey in Myrtle Beach, and working with the staff and members of First Presbyterian Church Myrtle Beach to do the work that God has laid out before them.

Statement of Faith

Christa Brewer

God the Father, omnipotent and sovereign over all creation, created all that is. God the Son, who, in the incarnation, became human as the person of Jesus, lived and ministered for a time on earth. From the beginning, humans sinned against God, causing a separation in the relationship between God and humanity. The price of humanity's sins is death. Jesus came to earth, not only to minister and teach about God, but also to die for us in our place. Jesus took the world's sins upon his innocent self, and through his death and resurrection, sin and death were defeated and a right relationship with God was restored. Jesus will come again to judge the world and bring the fullness of God's Kingdom to the world. Jesus was one person with two natures; he was fully human and fully God. God the Holy Spirit lives in those who want the Holy Spirit within them. The Holy Spirit is our advocate before the Father and guides and counsels us in the ways of God. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are three persons in one Triune God.

We are justified by faith alone and not through works. However, in response to this grace of God, we choose to do good works as an act of gratitude to God. God begins a process of sanctification within us when we choose to have a relationship with God, and this process will be completed on the day of Jesus Christ.

The Bible is divinely inspired and authoritative. It reveals the nature of God and God's love and faithfulness to God's people, bears witness to the life of Jesus, and teaches us what it means to follow Jesus. It also teaches us to participate in the sacraments of baptism and communion, which highlight the covenantal nature of our relationships with God and each other. In baptism, one enters into a covenantal relationship with God through the power of the Holy Spirit; we participate in the death and resurrection of Jesus and our old life dies and our new life in Christ begins. The water symbolizes the washing and cleansing of sins and God's presence is in the water through the power of the Holy Spirit. Baptism is one's adoption into the Church and an important covenantal relationship forms between the baptized and the church, with the church agreeing to foster and nurture the faith of the baptized. Communion is a celebration of thanksgiving and remembrance of God's work in this world, particularly through the sacrifice of Jesus. In it, we celebrate and remember our baptism. The real presence of Christ is found in the bread and juice, and partaking in communion is God's most tangible and visible form of God's love poured out for God's people. Communion communicates God's love, grace, forgiveness, and redemption, and we should celebrate it often.

Jesus is the head of the church and God gifts each member of the church in a unique way to carry out its mission. The church is a community of disciples called to proclaim the good news of the gospel, bear witness to Jesus' life, and minister to all people.

Spiritual Journey

Christa Brewer

I am blessed to be a life-long Presbyterian. Growing up, I attended Carmichael Presbyterian Church, and it is the church in which I was baptized, confirmed, and ordained as a minister of word and sacrament. My family was always active in the church, and so I was very active in the church. In my younger years, I was in children's choirs, Christmas pageants, and Vacation Bible School. As I entered Jr. High, I started playing with the youth handbell choir, began to attend youth group, and participated on a mission trip to a Heifer Ranch. In high school, I sang with a youth and young adult ensemble, joined the orchestra, participated in a youth musical and directed two others, and participated in a mission trip to the Navajo Indian Reservation in Arizona. While I was actively participating, I was also actively falling in love with the church and its ministry. Some people started wondering if I would one day be a leader in the church, perhaps even a pastor, but I always thought that pastoring was what "other people do."

Every summer from the time I was entering the 3rd grade, I attended one of our Presbyterian summer camps, most frequently at Westminster Woods Presbyterian Camp and Conference Center. The faith formation that happened at camp was foundational to my understanding of God, and I began to be shaped as a leader by their leadership program for teens. After graduating from high school, I spent two years on their summer staff, and served once again much later in 2003.

While in college at Stanford University, I sought out a Christian fellowship group, and ended up landing in the group that was based out of Menlo Park Presbyterian Church (MPPC) and met on our campus. While our college pastor was phenomenal and the fellowship group was important to me, I knew that the group did not fulfill the need to worship with the whole body of the church, and thus I began to attend worship services at MPPC. Subsequently, I became involved with the Jr. High youth group, as a leader for upper elementary small groups, and as a server at Saturday night dinners. I was also heavily involved with our college fellowship group, attending Bible studies, participating in mission trips to the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua, and starting a prayer group. People at the church, Bible study leaders, and friends kept asking if I thought I might consider the pastorate. I kept saying that I'd be a life-long church volunteer, but never a pastor.

My sophomore year, I had the opportunity to take a geophysics class that studied earthquakes and archaeology in the Ancient Near Eastern Mediterranean, which took us on a ten-day field trip to Israel and Jordan. While the purpose of the trip was not religious, I was still in awe of walking where Jesus had walked. It brought the Bible to

(Spiritual Journey continued)

life for me in a new way, now that I could visualize where the stories took place. It also inspired me to dig more into the Bible. Encouraged by a friend, one way I did this was to take two years of classical Greek so that I could read the New Testament in its original language.

On track to pursue masters work in classics, God had other plans. During the last month of my junior year, I had three completely unrelated people stop mid-way through conversations with me and tell me that they thought that God might be calling me to pastoral ministry. The third time, I could not ignore it. The restlessness I felt, wondering if God was calling me to pursue vocational ministry, led me to apply in my senior year for internships with other college ministry programs around the country. Following graduation, I served for a year as the college ministry intern at First Presbyterian Winston-Salem, North Carolina, primarily serving the students of Wake Forest and Salem College. I used it as a year to test out a call to ministry, but assured God that if God did not make a call extremely clear, I was going back to do further coursework in Egyptology and classical economies. I took advantage of the year, asking at times to shadow different staff members in order to be introduced to what it was like to work in various aspects of church ministry. In the spring, I co-led a pilot college mission trip to Guatemala. On our final night, as we asked the students to stand up and say where they saw God on this trip, I listened intently to all of them. When it was my turn, I had not thought about what I would say in advance. I stood up and started talking about my love of serving God, my love of serving the church, and the joy that I experience from serving in the church and being with God's people. I knew as I was speaking that God was speaking clearly to me.

Too late to enroll in seminary for that fall, I worked for a year in California before entering Princeton Theological Seminary in the fall of 2003. Not having been able to study abroad at Stanford due to my course schedule, and still wanting that experience, I asked my field education advisor about church internships abroad. The seminary supported summer internships in places like Ghana, South Africa, and Jamaica, and I thought that one of those sounded fun. Instead, he said that he thought I would be a really good fit to work with the pastor in Groomsport, Northern Ireland, which was one of the year-long internship opportunities. I explained to him that I did not want to go to Northern Ireland, and I did not want to go away for a whole year. Normally interns went after their second year of seminary, not their first, so he told me to meet the pastor when he came out to interview in November. At that time, I could get a flavor for the internship and the supervising pastor, and then decide if I wanted to apply for the following year. My interview with The Rev. Dr. Roger Purce reminded me a bit of the interaction between Moses and God when Moses tried to tell God why he was not the right person for the job. It became clear very quickly that even though I reminded Roger that I was not interested in going to Northern Ireland the next year, he had different ideas. He kept asking me why I was not coming the next year, and I gave him my laundry list of excuses. I had not preached yet. I had not taken theology yet. I was just starting to settle in with friends. I had several other reasons too, but God and Roger were both persistent, and I ended up accepting the offer to work at Groomsport Presbyterian Church for eleven months in 2004-2005, after I completed a summer of Clinical Pastoral Education at Stanford and Lucille Packard Children's Hospitals.

(Spiritual Journey continued)

My year in Northern Ireland was transformative. I served as the full-time assistant minister (associate pastor) of Groomsport Presbyterian Church, and had all of the full responsibilities in that position that would have been given to someone ordained. It was my year to really test if God was calling me to become a pastor or calling me to pursue further studies and eventually be a seminary faculty member. God had me fall in love with serving the church through pastoral ministry that year, and the call to pastoral ministry was confirmed by Roger and many of the church members. I loved it so much there, that I also began to wonder if God might one day be calling me to serve in the PC(Ireland).

In the summer of 2006, I served three small churches in Charleston, West Virginia, which were supposed to have merged into one church the Sunday before I arrived. However, the vote on the merger failed, so I ended up working for all three churches. Still wondering if I had a call to work in the PC (Ireland), and with the itch to go back to the island of Ireland, I worked over the course of the next year to set up an internship in the Republic of Ireland. In the summer of 2007, I served Mountmellick and Tullamore Presbyterian Churches in the near geographic center of Ireland. These rural and very small churches in the Republic of Ireland created a wonderful contrast to my time in the suburban and large church in Groomsport, Northern Ireland. It gave me the opportunity to see a very different side to pastoring in the PC(Ireland). At the end of that summer, I heard God telling me, "Yes, but not yet." to further work there, and so I pursued opportunities in the PC(USA) following my 2008 graduation from Princeton Theological Seminary, where I graduated with an M.Div., and M.A. in Christian Education.

That fall, I was called to serve as the associate pastor of The Woodlands Community Presbyterian Church in The Woodlands, Texas, a northern suburb of Houston, where my calling to the pastoral ministry was only further confirmed. I have served primarily in the areas of adult education and discipleship, mission, pastoral care, and worship. Following a call that God placed on my heart back in seminary, I spent three years studying and working toward a Diploma in the Art of Spiritual Direction at San Francisco Theological Seminary, and I graduated with this diploma in 2012. This allows me to serve as a certified spiritual director.

There is a time and a season for everything, and I eventually began to sense that it was time to seek a second call and see what God has prepared for me next. I am honored and excited that this next call is to the First Presbyterian Church of Myrtle Beach!

(Spiritual Journey continued)

While moving on is always a time of excitement for what is ahead, there is also grief for what we leave behind. I am thankful that one important part of my life in Texas is not ending. In October 2010, the General Presbyter of the New Covenant Presbytery helped two of us in our early 30s to form a colleague group for young pastors in the Presbytery. The group began with six members. This group has been a source of friendship, support, prayer, and much more, and with members of the group starting to move into calls elsewhere, we began to ask ourselves how we stay together despite the distance. Always interested as a group in spiritual formation and spiritual disciplines, five of the original six group members chose to form a cohort group and apply to Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary's College of Pastoral Leaders grant for a two-year self-planned agenda. We were excited to become recipients of that grant in late June. For the next two years, we will be studying spiritual formation as it takes place in community and spiritual disciplines best practiced in community, and we will seek to find ways for us to remain a spiritual community with one another, even when we are scattered across the United States. We also desire to develop resources for our churches and Presbyteries to assist in forming deeper spiritual communities with one another. The highlight of our grant is a three-week trip to Europe in 2015 to study the communities of Taizé and Iona, and to visit the sites of ancient spiritual communities in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

I am excited to follow God to the community of faith at the First Presbyterian Church of Myrtle Beach. I have learned that in every new place, God has many blessings waiting there for me, and I pray that I am a blessing to you as much as I know that you will be to me.

Dear Friends at First Presbyterian,

I first visited Myrtle Beach on a family vacation when I was eight years old. I was so enamored with the endless miniature golf courses, that I decided it would be a dream to live there some day. Despite my pleading, we didn't have time to play a course when I was there that time. However, my dad promised me that if we were ever in Myrtle Beach again, he would let me pick any miniature golf course that I wanted, and we would play it together. I had the opportunity to take him up on that offer nine years later, when we visited Myrtle Beach on a side trip after a national science competition in Raleigh. Even then, I said it must be heaven to live in a place with beautiful beaches on the warm Atlantic with miniature golf courses everywhere in sight. Little did I know when I was eight or seventeen that I would end up moving to Myrtle Beach one day, where I have already played a round of miniature golf with John. (He won, but the rematch is coming!)

But I am coming to Myrtle Beach for far more than the childhood dreams of living by the beach and miniature golf courses. I am coming to accept the call to be your associate pastor, and to walk side by side with you as we go about doing God's ministry together. And what an exciting time in the life of the church to be joining your pastoral team!

I do not know exactly what God will have in store for us in the years ahead, but I do come in confidence that God will bless us in ways that we cannot even yet foresee and will be faithful to us throughout our time together. I look forward to joining with John and Cam and the rest of the church staff, and coming to meet you all over time. You might need to remind me of your name two, three, or seven times, but I will learn them!

I have to say a big 'thank you' to the APNC for their hard work and diligence throughout the search process. They have been nothing but gracious, kind, and welcoming. If your APNC is reflective of the church, which I believe it is, I know that I am coming to a warm, welcoming, energetic, and active church, eager to serve God and neighbor. I can't ask for more.

As I wind down my time as the associate pastor at The Woodlands Community Presbyterian Church, I am also eagerly anticipating what is next for me as the associate pastor at First Presbyterian Church Myrtle Beach. I look forward to meeting you all soon!

With many blessings,
Christa Brewer

This was taken in October 2012 right before the Stanford vs. Notre Dame football game. Go Stanford! From left to right: Christa, my sister Karen, nephew Steven, and parents Phyllis and David.

Where Love Makes the Difference

First Presbyterian Church of Myrtle Beach

843.448.4496

P.O. Box 1306; Myrtle Beach, SC 29578

www.myrtlebeachpresbyterianchurch.org

Grissom Campus:
3810 Robert Grissom Parkway; Myrtle Beach, SC 29577

Kings Campus:
1300 N. Kings Highway; Myrtle Beach, SC 29577